



Stan Dixon Entertainment & Event Planning

1852 Marrose Dr. Lancaster, Ohio 43130
(614) 619-1135 • email: standixonentertainment@gmail.com
www.standixonentertainment.com

Wedding Reception Planner

I believe a good plan is the foundation for a wonderful, exciting, reception and a great memorable party for you and your guests.

Don't be overwhelmed. With a good foundation you can have the reception of your dreams. I am available to answer any of your questions and concerns, create special moments you would like, and give you ideas for a unique and memorable event.

Let's start with the basic format for a five hour wedding reception.

1 Hour Cocktails

Introductions

1 Hour Meal

Cake Cutting

Formal Dances

3 Hours Dancing

Bouquet Toss, Garter, Dollar Dance, Ethnic or Traditional Dancing

Cocktails

The cocktail hour allows the photographer time for completing the formal wedding photographs and unique photos you may have planned after the wedding. If there is a period of time between the wedding and the reception the cocktail hour is a prelude to the reception. Appetizers and refreshments are served with background music. A 45 minute to 1 hour and 30 minute cocktail hour works best. Remember, food will temper the effect of any beverages served and makes for a great beginning to your event.

When should the cocktail hour begin? Allow a few minutes for your guests to leave the ceremony then add any drive time to the reception location. Example: The wedding ceremony begins at 5:30pm and ends at 6:00pm. Guests exit the ceremony by 6:10pm. There is a 20 minute drive to the reception. Cocktails should begin at 6:30pm. The reception facility should be open for guests by the earliest possible arrival. For guests attending the wedding in this example the earliest arrival would be 6:15pm.

Introductions

The wedding party and the bride and groom typically arrive near the end of the cocktail hour. The guests are then asked to take their seats and the DJ/Coordinator organizes everyone for introductions. After the wedding party introductions the bride and groom or the father of the bride may wish to give a short welcome speech to all the guests. This is followed with the toast of the best man and maid or matron of honor and the blessing. There are different variations for this sequence. You may choose to place the toasts during the salad course or later on in the meal. We can also talk about making the introductions very personal and unique for your event. This portion of the reception does not take much time but is so important to your event. This is the true beginning of the reception party!

The Meal

Your banquet manager or caterer will know exactly how long the meal will last. The bride and groom are always served first. This allows the bride and groom to meet and mingle with their guests during the dinner hour. I prefer toasts to be given during the salad course. When people are eating they do not converse as much, it is easier to get their attention, and more likely to listen and enjoy the toasts. If the toasts are scheduled after everyone has been through the buffet line it is important that the bride and groom return to the head table for the toasts. Photographs will be taken during the toasts. You may want the entire wedding party back at the head table for these pictures.

Stan Dixon Entertainment - Reception Planner

Cake Cutting

The tradition of cutting the cake can be done with “taste” or the bride and groom can “go for the moment”. I have a few ideas that can make this a fun event for you. I always suggest that the bride and groom take the microphone and thank all their guests after cutting the cake. This is a wonderful time to address everyone, tell them how important it is that they are with you, and encourage your guests to have a wonderful time.

Formal Dances

The father-daughter dance and the bridal dance are timeless traditions. If it is appropriate the mother-son dance is a wonderful addition to these dances. You may also wish to have a wedding party dance, a parent’s dance, or a family dance. We can discuss all of the options and pick those dances that you would like to do.

Let the Dancing Begin!

After the bridal dance and any other traditions the open dancing portion of your reception begins. Remember that most people are very intimidated by the dance floor. The best way to get your guests to participate is to ease them into dancing with a nice slow song that is easily recognizable. The bride and groom AND the wedding party should remain on the dance floor. Your guests want to be with YOU! They want to be part of your celebration. If the bride and groom and the wedding party stay on the dance floor for the first few dances the guests will start to feel comfortable with dancing and enjoy the remainder of the evening.

After thirty to forty-five minutes of dancing is the best time for the bouquet and garter toss. You can make this unique and special by picking songs to bring the single women to the dance floor, another song to bring the single men to the dance floor, and finally a song to be played while the groom removes the garter from the bride. In certain instances it might be appropriate for the garter catcher to place the garter on the lady who caught the bouquet. Many times this cannot be done but if you want to be ready choose a song for this also.

Family tradition or at the request of the bride and groom a “dollar” or “money” dance can be introduced immediately after the bouquet and garter toss. I have found this to be the best time for this tradition. If you would like to include this in your reception I will help you with the decisions necessary for a successful dance. There are alternatives to a dollar dance. You can have the bridal party “kidnap” the bride or groom and hold them for a ransom. You can even pit one school against another to collect money for the bride and groom.

The Party Ends

If the Bride and Groom remain for the entire reception the bride and groom can dance one last slow dance with everyone to reflect on the day and congratulate the new married couple. There may also be a group song that is requested to end the party.

I hope this general outline gives you a better understanding of the basics for a wedding reception. As you can see, once the time for the cocktail and dinner hour is set the remainder of the event will flow. I will personally take care of this and direct the event behind the scenes so you can relax, enjoy and have a wonderful time with your guests.

The Reception Planner

On the following pages you will find more detail to help guide you through the process of planning your reception. The initial **Order of Events** timetable page will be the **last** worksheet we complete together at our final planning meeting. You only need to identify the start times for the wedding, drive time, cocktails, and the meal. We will complete the remainder of the timetable together.

The **Reception Location** page has information that will be important for the DJ. Names, locations, and phone numbers are the most important. This gives me the information I need to contact the venue, caterer, photographer, and videographer if needed. The remainder of the planner discusses each aspect of a reception. On these pages you can choose things you want or don’t want or make comments that we will discuss together. At the end of the planner you will find a page for the Order of Introductions. This is the list of parents, bridesmaids, groomsmen, best man and maid or matron of honor, and finally the bride and groom.

The bottom line, HAVE FUN with this planner! We will create a fun reception using this as a foundation to a great party.

Stan Dixon Entertainment - Reception Planner

Reception Day & Date: _____ Entertainment Start Time: _____ End Time: _____

Bride's Name: _____ Groom's Name: _____

Brides Phone/Cell: _____ Grooms Phone/Cell: _____

Bride's email: _____ Groom's email: _____

Bride's Parents _____ Groom's Parents _____

Order of Events

Sequence	Time	Event
		Wedding – (Location and address)
		Photographs after wedding
		Drive time between Wedding and Reception
		Guests arrive at Reception
		Cocktail Hour (if DJ providing music for that too)
		Reception Start – Organize Wedding Party for Introductions
		Grand Entrance
		Grace/Blessing
		Salad
		Toast(s) (make sure champagne or a toasting beverage has been poured!)
		Main Course
		Cake Cutting
		Father/Daughter Dance (can be combined with Mother/Son Dance)
		Mother/Son Dance (can be combined with Father/Daughter Dance)
		First Dance (Father/Daughter – Mother/Son can be the lead in to this - Parents bring B & G together)
		Wedding Party Dance (can be combined with first dance)
		Friends and Relatives Join Wedding Party
		Open Dancing (maybe just one or two slow songs or 30 – 45min. of Dancing)
		Kids Toss (If there are younger children you can toss small stuffed animals to them)
		Bouquet / Garter (We can discuss these traditional events to keep them appropriate for your Reception)
		Open Dancing
		Dollar Dance (Must be planned well to be successful)
		Last Dance – Departure of Bride and Groom

*Note: The printed order of events is only a suggestion. Every reception is different. This is YOUR reception. **Items may be added, removed, or rearranged as long as it is clearly indicated in the above table.** We will prepare a final order of events from this form.*

Remember to review this schedule with your venue and caterer! ‘~’ means approximate time.

Stan Dixon Entertainment - Reception Planner

Reception Location Information

Name/Address of Establishment: _____

Primary Room Name/Location: _____ Floor: _____

Contact name: _____ Phone/Cell: _____

Contact Information For Other Party Professionals (this information is not mandatory but is very helpful for planning purposes)

	Name	Phone	Cell/Fax or email	Booked From-To
Caterer				
Banquet Hall/Venue				
Planner/Coordinator				
Photographer				
Videographer				

Reception Information

Total Number of guests: _____ Adults: _____ Children: _____

Will the meal be Served, Buffet, or Hours' Devours? _____ Estimated time for the meal _____

If the meal is to be served "buffet style" the wait staff should release tables.

Cocktail Hour

Will the Cocktail hour be in a different room or location? _____ If so, indicate where.* _____

*If Cocktails are in an area separate from the banquet room a separate sound system may be necessary at additional cost.

Music for cocktail hour (*suggested genres are soft jazz, soft show tunes, or slow rock*):

Reception Begins - (Guests enter main reception room from cocktail area)

The selection of music will set the mood for the early part of the reception. We will discuss this and tailor it to your event.

Reception Grand Entrance / Introductions

As your *Master of Ceremonies* I will announce the Wedding Party. If you would like someone else to perform the introductions we will need to discuss this portion of your party.

Suggested Order Of Introductions:

(Grandparents can be recognized stand from their seats.)(You may also want to introduce the ushers, ring bearer and flower girl.)

- | | |
|------------------------------|--|
| 1. Bride's grandparents | 6. Bridesmaids and Groomsmen |
| 2. Groom's grandparents | 7. Maid/Matron Of Honor (<i>Can be combined with Best Man</i>) |
| 3. Bride's parents | 8. Best Man (<i>Can be combined with Maid/Matron of Honor</i>) |
| 4. Groom's Parents | 9. Bride and Groom |
| 5. Bridesmaids and Groomsmen | |

Stan Dixon Entertainment - Reception Planner

Order of Introductions

The first people to be introduced would be those who are seated followed by the wedding party ending with the Bride and Groom. Please clearly indicate how you would like to be introduced. The bride and groom will also be announced at the bridal dance. You can have a formal introduction for one and an informal for other. Your choice!

1		Escorted by:	
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			
12			

Stan Dixon Entertainment - Reception Planner

The music for the Grand Entrance should be upbeat music with no vocals if possible. Some suggested music follows:

Wedding Party Enters Reception

- Father of the Bride (Main Theme – Movie)
- Peanuts Theme (*Contemporary*)
- Sirius (Alan Parsons Project) (*Chicago Bulls Theme*)
- Chapel Of Love (Dixie Cups) (*50's Contemporary*)
- America (Neil Diamond) (*Contemporary*)
- David Letterman Theme (*excellent for all introductions*)

Bride and Groom Enter Reception

- David Letterman Theme (*Again, very effective*)
- Get Ready for This (*Contemporary*)
- Star Wars Theme or TV Themes
- 20th Century Fox Fanfare (or drum roll) (*Traditional*)
- Thunderstruck (AC DC)
- Get The Party Started – Pink (instrumental version)

Please remember to list those to be introduced during the grand entrance in the order they will be introduced. You can choose different songs or one for the entire group. *Use additional sheets if necessary. Add interesting pieces of information about the different relationships you have with each person in your wedding party. This can also be announced—if so, please write details below each person's name or you can write a script for this.*

Welcome Toast or Speech

The Father of the Bride, the parents, or the bride and groom can give a welcome toast, speech or “thank you” to the guests. This can add a personal touch to the beginning of the reception.

Welcome Toast/Speech by: _____

Grace (or other blessings)

<u>Blessing</u>	<u>Name of person (with phonetic pronunciation) to be introduced to lead blessing</u>

Meal

Instrumental “Cool Jazz” is great for the meal although any type of music can be played. Special songs can also be played during dinner.

While guests are waiting for food, we can encourage couples to come out on the floor and slow dance. This can make it difficult for serving the meal so please review this with your Caterer. There are other activities we can plan for your guests such as “Pearls of Wisdom” cards and “Love” song singing to the bride and groom. We can add any special activity you wish.

Toasts

Toasts during the salad course are very effective. Your guests are quiet and toasts that go for an extended length of time you will not delay the meal or any of the remaining events of the evening. Please indicate below the name of person(s) (*with phonetic pronunciation*) who will be introduced to give toasts. (*Usually the Best Man, but could be the Best Man and Maid/Matron Of Honor together*):

Best Man	
Maid / Matron of Honor	

Cake Cutting

This tradition creates quite an emotional response from your guests. We can discuss options to the “cake-in-the-face” that many of your guests will cheer for. After the cake cutting is a perfect time for the Bride and Groom to address their guests with a short speech. Your guests are uniquely focused on you at this time. A short, “Thank you all for coming. It means so much for all of you to be here. Please enjoy yourselves.” are words from your to your guests and convey your heartfelt desire for them to have a good time.

Music to play as a segue to the cake cutting (suggestions follow):

- Cut the Cake (Average White Band)
- When I'm 64 (Beatles)
- How Sweet It Is To Be Loved By You (James Taylor)
- Eat It (Weird Al Yankovic)

Stan Dixon Entertainment - Reception Planner

Father/Daughter and Mother/Son Dances

Father/Daughter and Mother/Son dances make an excellent intro to the wedding dance. As these two dances end the parents can bring the Bride and Groom together for their first dance. This allows the mother of the groom to be recognized and become part of the festivities. The father of the bride can give his daughter away one more time! These songs can be as short as one minute, combined, or can be separate dances. We can discuss what is appropriate for your reception.

Music for Father/Daughter and Mother/Son dance (suggestions follow but your personal selections can always be used.):

- Unforgettable (Natalie Cole or Nat King Cole)
- Wind Beneath My Wings (Bette Midler)
- Through the Years (Kenny Rogers)
- What A Wonderful World (Louis Armstrong)
- *I Hope You Dance* (Leann Womack)
- Always and Forever (Heatwave or Luther Vandross)
- Daddy's Little Girl (Al Martino) (*not at Jewish weddings*)
- You've Got a Friend (James Taylor) (*If someone other than Father / Mother*)
- That's What Friends Are For (*Wedding Party Dance*)

First Dance

Music for first dance (*slow song recommended*):

This is "Your Dance" but is also a unique photo opportunity. A 3-minute to 4 minute long first dance with just the bride and groom can be too long for your guests. Your photographer should be able to complete any photos of the bride and groom in about 2 minutes. A nice addition to your first dance is to invite the parents to join in for the last part of your dance. You can then switch partners, bride with father of the groom, groom with mother of the bride, and mother of the bride with father of the groom for a complete set of family dance photos. If time allows, inviting the bridesmaids and groomsmen to dance can increase the ability of the photographer to photograph the entire bridal party. You can have us invite your guests to join in partway through the above song, or we can invite them up when the next song begins. We can have the wedding party join you first and invite the rest of the guests to join in one verse later, or we can invite all of the guests (including wedding party) to join in at the same time. We can discuss this and add it to your reception plan.

First slow song after first dance - All the friends and relatives join with the wedding party. (*or we can choose for you*):

Type of music to continue with after first dance. (*High-energy dance music is recommended, but slow dancing or any other type can be used. If desired, you can also list specific songs here.*)

Dancing Begins!

How do you want to start off the general dancing? *We recommend going into a high-energy follow-along dance.* Some specific suggestions follow. We can begin with any type of music you request. If the wedding party and the bride and groom stay on the dance floor for the first few dances your guests will know that it is OK for them to dance and enjoy themselves. People will take their "lead" from the wedding party.

- We Are Family (Sister Sledge)
- Old Time Rock and Roll (Bob Seger)
- In the Mood (Glenn Miller)
- Twist and Shout (The Beatles)
- Celebration (Kool and the Gang)
- YOUR CHOICE!

Bouquet and Garter

The bouquet toss is a special fun tradition at any wedding reception. The removal of the garter can be a quite bold move by the groom or handled with care. We can discuss an appropriate choice for you. If you are hesitant about either of these traditions please consider that these events bring a history to your event that span the time from all ages and can be significant to your guests. Remember, at all times we respect your requests. Another tradition is the Garter Catcher places the garter on the Bouquet Catcher's Leg. This can be inappropriate in some instances. We can have them stand for a picture, have them dance together, or have the garter placed followed by a dance. This can be your decision at the event. We will work closely with you to orchestrate this part of tradition if you wish.

Bouquet Toss

- Girls Just Want to Have Fun (Cyndi Lauper)
- Pretty Woman (Roy Orbison)
- It's Raining Men (Weather Girls)
- All The Single Ladies (Beyonce)

Groom Removes Garter

- Theme From Mission Impossible
- Oh Yeah (Yello, From Ferris Bueller's Day Off)
- Peter Gunn Theme
- Legs (ZZ Top)

Invite Men Out and Garter Toss

- I'm A Man (Spencer Davis)
- Peter Gunn Theme
- Oh Yeah (Yello, From Ferris Bueller's Day Off)

Garter Catcher Puts Garter On Bouquet Catcher's Leg

- Keep Your Hands To Yourself (Georgia Satellites)
- Theme From Mission Impossible
- Oh Yeah (Yello, From Ferris Bueller's Day Off)
- Hot Legs (Rod Stewart)

Stan Dixon Entertainment - Reception Planner

Money Dance or Dollar Dance

To be effective and not take up too much time the traditional Money Dance or Dollar Dance must be orchestrated from the selection of people taking the money, length of time for each dancer, to the types of containers used to collect the “dollars”. If you would like to have a “Dollar Dance” we will need to discuss and plan ahead for this portion of your event.

Grand Finale – Last Dance

Before the last dance, we can organize guests into a circle around the bride and groom as a finale to your reception. We can pass a microphone around, and allow your guests to each offer best wishes if you would like. Here are some song suggestions. If you have another “special” song this is a great time to play this song. You may want to dance a second time to your bridal dance.

Music for last dance (some suggestions follow):

- Last Dance (Donna Summer)
- I’ve Had the Time Of My Life (from Dirty Dancing)
- American Pie (Over 8 minutes long!)
- Piano Man (Billy Joel)
- The Party’s Over (Willie Nelson or Nat King Cole)
- That’s What Friends Are For (Dionne Warwick)

Are you leaving before the last dance? If so, at what time? Do you want your exit to be announced? Note any special activity here.

Ethnic Dances, Etc.

Please indicate any specific ethnic dances you want to do or customs you wish to observe, and at what points in the reception you would like for these to occur (also add them to order of events on page 1). Make sure to include names (with phonetic pronunciations) of specific people to be involved (i.e., names of people that will be lifted up in chairs).

Follow-Along Dances (optional)

Any specific dances you would like us to lead please note them here. Here are some of the dances we are currently doing. If you do not want our participation in leading these dances just let us know.

- Conga
- Cha Cha Slide
- Chicken Dance
- C’mon ‘N Ride It (The Train)
- Cotton-Eyed Joe (Rednex)
- Get Down Tonight (The Bump)
- Cowboy Slide
- Hokey Pokey
- Macarena
- Booty Call
- Electric Slide
- Shout
- Staying Alive
- YMCA

Music Requests (Songs to DEFINITELY be played) (Use our song list to indicate these songs or list them here)

Songs & Music NOT To Be Played (Use our song list to indicate these songs or list them here)

Songs To Be Played ONLY IF REQUESTED BY A GUEST (List here or use additional sheets if necessary)

